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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3076
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0891
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0765
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1341
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASCH](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MEETING WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ON ASHGABAT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

REF: ASHGABAT 1300

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) The next step in the process of registering the Quality Schools International (QSI)- run Ashgabat International School (AIS) took place November 30 when MFA arranged a meeting for the Embassy with the Ministry of Education (MoE). The Charge met with First Deputy Minister of Education Gundoggy Shadurdyev, Deputy Minister for Schools and Pre-Schools Gulshat Mammedova and Head of the International Department Nury Bayramov. Mammedova, who had the lead, said a 1994 Agreement signed between QSI and the MoE was no longer suitable, as it does not accurately describe the schools activities and is not fully compliant with contemporary Turkmenistan internal regulations. She noted, however, that the presence of an international school in Turkmenistan was understandable, as expatriate children could not reasonably use local schools, and some citizens of Turkmenistan would like the opportunity to study in English. She asked the Embassy to prepare a new draft agreement, to which the Ministry would provide comments. The MoE officials requested a copy of the future curriculum, alluding to earlier indications from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that some courses on Turkmen language, culture, and history may be required to gain final approval (Reftel). They mentioned the Ministry was particularly interested in the name of the school and wanted to be sure that "Ashgabat" be part of it. (COMMENT: The school is called the Ashgabat International School, so it struck us as an odd request. Evidently, they want to be sure that part of the name is not changed during the process. Interestingly, the Russian school, which is sponsored jointly by the Russian and Turkmenistan governments does not contain Ashgabat in its name. The school is named after Pushkin. END COMMENT.)

13. (SBU) Bayramov asked that the agreement (with copy of the future curriculum attached) be sent via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and noted it would eventually need Cabinet of Ministers approval. He was especially careful to explain

that any ongoing questions over the current location of the school had to be discussed with the Ashgabat mayor's office and not the MoE. The next meeting between the Embassy and MoE regarding the school would take place after receipt of the new draft agreement.

¶4. (SBU) On December 1, Charge and Embassy Management Officer met with the AIS director to brief him in detail about the meeting and discuss the timeline for submitting the draft agreement. He welcomed the news of progress on the school's registration and said incorporating a Turkmen History and language course should not be a problem, since that would be a local decision that he would not have to refer to QSI leadership. He said he would talk to QSI leadership on December 3 and obtain copies of standard QSI school agreements to use as a starting point. He estimated that a draft could be ready by early December 5. The group decided to meet again December 5 to review the draft before submitting it to MFA via diplomatic note.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: This latest round of interaction is yet more good news in the effort to regularize the school's status. AIS wants to expand its operations to account for increased demand and to prepare for what promises to be a large influx of expatriates over the coming year. Bayramov's request for the &future curriculum appears to confirm that the Turkmenistan government would like to ensure that a school in Turkmenistan that also teaches Turkmen students include instruction about the country.

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